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ABSTRACT

As the world changes, so do the helping professions in community and youth work, and so does the nature of their training. This paper is written on the assumption that the function of the helping professions is either to remedy incoherence or to help people live with it. Those who work with people are therefore remedying, or helping people live with, the lack of connections between events, ideas, and people, or the lack of experiences, connections between events, ideas, and people. It is the lack of such connections that makes people feel that life is meaningless, and that purposive action is pointless or impossible. Training for the helping professions can no longer rely simply on transmitting received knowledge. The report describes how to manage and administer community and youth services, how to improve simple human relations, how to work with people in community and youth groups creating new connections among people, and how to introduce stimuli and new ideas into the helping professions. (Author/PG)

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TRAINING FOR THE NEW HELPING PROFESSIONS - COMMUNITY AND YOUTH WORK

Josephine Klein

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Josephine Klein

HE 005298

UNIVERSITY of LONDON GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE

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TRAINING FOR THE NEW HELPING PROFESSIONS- COMMUNITY AND YOUTH WORK

My starting point is a kind of phantasied history of the world, and of the place of the 'helping professions' in it. I take some imaginary era, ages ago, when the only helping professions were priestcraft and medicine. That world, I imagine, was stable and coherent. Changes in social structure and in social ideas were imperceptible; if there were contradictions in either, they were not perceived. The social structure then was stable; its theory of society and its philosophy of life coherent. Priests gave professional help by telling people what to do when in doubt; medicine men gave professional help by giving specifics to sick people. They learned to do this by learning the traditional rules which dictated what to do in specific cases, and also they learned some underlying rationalisation, explanation, philosophy, theory, general principles or Weltanschauung which would give subjective meaning to the specific rules of procedure. In a stable and coherent world, most of this could be learned by rote. A good memory was essential because there might be many rules to remember for many eventualities. On the other hand, understanding was not a problem: it could be taken for granted since there is little incentive for doubt, questioning or conflict in a stable and coherent world.

I can imagine, too, developments in that world so that it becomes a somewhat less coherent and orderly place. More effort would be required to get the rules of procedure to apply to specific cases. Interpretation now becomes a new helping profession: teachers and lawyers join. Ingenuity becomes more highly prized, in the restatement and refinement both of general principles and of the rules of procedure which dictate appropriate action in specific cases. Training would then necessarily consist of more than rote learning: practice would be needed in the skills which would enable people to reduce the world to order and coherence again, whether the order be there in an objectively discoverable chain of cause and effect, or whether the sense of order has to be recreated in men's minds so that it can be subjectively felt to exist. In some unlucky circumstances, verbal fluency and agility would become the skills by means of which the world is reduced to order again. These verbal skills are often called 'reasoning' but this can be confusing: Aristotle produces sound examples of such skills, but the schoolmen produced sick ones. (1) In some lucky circumstances we can imagine a kind of empiricism gaining a foothold: practice in the task of checking whether the application of a rule of procedure to a set of circumstances produces the expected effect or not, and practice in scrapping rules which do not. But this is very rare. A lot of very strenuous practice is needed in scrapping rules of procedure before we can do so at need; rules are even now the stuff our thoughts are made of.

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(1) I would explicitly exclude symbolic logic from what I here rather derogatorily call reasoning, on the grounds of its relative independence from verbal jiggery-pokery.

There may have been further developments in training for the 'helping professions' since the stage we imagined just above, but we can still easily recognise combinations of the elements of rote learning, spurious and legitimate verbal skills, and empiricism, variously represented in today's legal or medical training, training for the priesthood, or social work or community or youth or playgroup work. (2)

As the world changes, so do the 'helping professions' and so does the nature of training. Now the world has in some ways become a complex and incoherent place, and our ways of thinking about it may need to be equally complex and incoherent, or, at best partial. What behaviour is now to be regarded as helpful work with people? And how can people learn to do this work. It is no longer enough to tell clients or students what to do or to give them lists of specifics. What may have been possible in the imaginary orderly world where people could be thought of as fitting socially into a single coherent society, and where ideas could be thought of as fitting intellectually into a single coherent philosophy, a world view agreed by all. It is, however, the lack of such coherence which has helped to create the demand for people to work with people. (Where the demand comes from which insists they must be trained to do so, or the rule of procedure which insists that only trained people may do so, deserves a paper in its own right).

This paper is written on the assumption that the function of the helping professions which 'work with people' is: either to remedy incoherence or to help people live with it. Bits which can cohere can be connected into structures: social structures like associations, workshops, friendship groups, demonstrating crowds, etc., and psychic structures like explanations, understandings, theories, working hypotheses, etc. Those who work with people are therefore remedying, or helping people live with, the lack of connections between events, ideas, people, or the lack of experienced connections between events, ideas, people. It is the lack of such connections which makes people feel that life is meaningless, and that purposive action is pointless or impossible.

Sets of connections I shall call 'structures' where convenient. It is now obvious why the nature of training for the new helping professions has to change. To the extent that the world is not coherent, it would be damaging to engage in training which allows the learner to believe that there is already a coherent world, which unfortunately he is too young, too stupid, or too inexperienced to see. Training can no longer rely to any great extent on transmitting 'received knowledge'. Interaction on a trainer-student dimension has become less appropriate, and the decision as to when a student should rely on his teacher (or, mutatis mutandis, the decision when to intervene as a teacher) has itself become an art - a highly individual matter dependent on one's judgement of the situation. We have thus two questions to handle, neither of them simple:-

what is 'working with people?'
what is 'training to work with people?'

I shall start with the first of these questions. It will turn out that, as it is being dealt with, progressively more light will be shed on the second. This should not come as a surprise, though it did even to the writer of this paper, for a kind of logic is involved: 1) you work with people by helping them to make connections social or psychological, 2) training is a way of

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(2) In a rough sort of way, the order in which these helping professions were listed in the text, indicates the extent to which each considers training to be essential to its practitioners. Some of the practitioners at the end of the list have little or no faith in the uses of training; some consider that training damages a person's capacity to help.

working with people, 3) you train people by helping them to make connections between thoughts, feelings facts, people.

In the main body of this paper I shall first make a distinction between maintaining structures, and creating new structures. When discussing the creation of new structures I shall make a further distinction, between creating structures to deal with a crisis, which I shall call 'responding to need' and others which I shall call 'creating autonomous structures', that is, creating structures capable of developing independently away from the circumstances and the people who created them. Because of my view of society as incoherent, I think it important that training should be aimed toward the development of whatever enables people to size up situations with fresh eyes, not too much affected by what was true in the past, or what worked well in the past. Contemporary training should aim at enabling people continually to make new connections, between perceptions, cognitions, ideas, feelings, experiences, people of all kinds. (3)

Maintaining structures

What goes on in a group at any moment can usually be identified as either in the interests of the performance of a group task or as concerned with sorting out the relations between people. The full-time worker will accordingly usually be engaged in

1) managing and administering agreed services
2) simple human relations work among people in groups

1. MANAGING AND ADMINISTERING AGREED SERVICES

People want playgrounds or playgroups or nursery education, comedy turns or dramatic performances, billiards or table tennis coaching or football matches, somewhere to sit and talk, get out of the house and meet the regulars, coach outings or rambles or barbecues, instruction in statistics, lectures on the law relating to housing, 'encounter' games, insight or clarinet practice.

All these services need premises which may need to be paid for, which need to be insured, which need to be kept clean, which need to be maintained; the services have to be financed, there have to be accounts and estimates of budgets; printed programmes have to be printed at the right time; planning for the future may need to start six or sixteen months beforehand. There is a whole administrative background to maintaining and administering a service.

In addition to those who are able to do this without rising above a reasonable low level of fuss, there are two categories of more extreme practitioners; those who act as though this was the whole substance of working with people and those who, on the other hand, ignore the need for solid administration and/or despise those who provid[illegible]t. Some youth workers I know seem unable to accept that they are club managers: not only are their arrangements often messy and disappointing (the football match is arranged for the wrong day; the Mars Bars haven't arrived; no minutes are kept of the members' committee meeting), they also intrude into tolerant young people's lives because they feel they should be constantly relating, counselling or socially educating. Others I know are purely managerial and are frequently out of touch with the current needs of their club members because they can never settle down to a pleasurable non-instrumental chat.

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(3) See Joan Tash Supervision in Youth Work, London Council of Social Service 1967.

From my point of view, the unfussy provision of premises - and all that this entails - is a staple service; it enables people to make their own connections, social, commercial, or intellectual. It is not romantic work, but it is basic; it is basic, but it is very limited. I am talking of a diet of potatoes.

A training agency has to ensure that the learner has no hang-ups about answering correspondence promptly, keeping straight-forward accounts, being punctual, etc., in short, the training agency has to ensure that routine is seen in a proper perspective; basic: neither romantic nor sufficient. A personality thrown by routine requirements will be limited in the help he can reliably offer anyone. It may be enough training if the training agency has its own routine in a proper perspective in its own programme and procedures: not too little, not too much, entirely visible, and not obtrusive.

The provision of agreed services also, however, raises some profounder problems. Services can be provided commercially if they can be made to pay a profit, or they can be provided at subsidised rates by voluntary or statutory agencies who wish to further them for other reasons than profit. Managing these arrangements is relatively simple, but non-commercial managers have certain additional problems by no means simple. The commercial manager is guided by public demand: demand tells him how many will pay for a particular facility at a particular price, and this tells him whether to provide facilities or not. Without this guide-line, how is the non-commercial manager to decide? Shall he provide only those facilities in great demand or not? What shall he initiate? Which abandon? By what criteria can he decide whether to encourage interest in a facility? And by what strategy, if he decides he should? More profoundly still, what ethical considerations would dictate that a particular service should be allowed to live or die as a co-operative or participant-run service?

To some extent, solutions to these questions may have been written into the worker's contract of service, though on the whole these are vaguer than one might suppose. Even so, has he or has he not some obligation to educate his employer? The training problem is: to provide settings which enable the learner to form judgements about such issues; more precisely, to enable him to form strategies for arriving at a judgement.

To write this in terms of the general outlook of this paper: training should help a worker to make new connections in his mind: it should be geared to helping him understand what he feels and thinks about a problematic issue; it should be geared to helping him understand the values to which he is committed and how these values affect his perception of situations and his preference for certain solutions. Training should help him connect his perceptions of situations to his preference for solving problems in a particular way, and to a constantly more coherent and less self-contradictory set of personal values. Training should also help him in making new social connections; it should be geared to strengthening his capacity for consulting with others when faced with problematic issues, and it should help him to do this with the right amounts of deference and independence of judgement in each case, and it should help him to recognise who are the right people to consult. And this in turn can only be understood in the context of his feelings and thoughts and personal values, etcetera, etcetera. At this point we find we have stepped into the section on creating new structures, and here we leave it for some pages.

2. SIMPLE HUMAN RELATIONS WORK AMONG PEOPLE IN GROUPS

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2. SIMPLE HUMAN RELATIONS WORK AMONG PEOPLE IN GROUPS

As a rule, working with people involves sets of them. The agency which employs the worker is one such set of people, whether it be an infrequently-met management-committee, or a more elaborate formal organisation in which the worker has an informal standing with his immediate

colleagues as well as a contractual role and status. Other sets of people are the actually or potentially supportive friends and/or colleagues the worker is in contact with. Quite often the clientele is another such set, whether it be an evening class, the children on the playground at this particular moment, or the families living in the block of flats where a move is afoot to set up a tenants' association.

Quite often, the people in such sets see something of each other, at the coffee breaks, on other committees, as friends who visit each other, in the corridors or on the streets. To the extent that they do so, they are a group. And people in groups are liable either to agree on the status of everyone in the group, in which case they will all listen more respectfully to some ideas than to others, or else they will feel puzzled and uncertain. In short, whether it be an interest group or a friendship group, compulsory or voluntary or free-for-all, people in groups will generate friendliness, hostility and anxiety in each other and in various unequal ways. Hierarchies of prestige may come about, or exclusion, or racism, or apathy, or foolish ways of going on. Alternatively, there may be warmth, depth, and creativity. What can the full-time professional, whose work entails continued contact with a group, do about a conflict he can see developing? What can he do about scapegoating? Or about a 'sick' leader who is getting himself a following? What can he do to encourage greater self-confidence and mutual trust? Wider interests? We will return to some of these questions in the section on creating new structures, but some have to do with maintaining the present structure because groups can die off or destroy themselves, and not always to the best advantage of those concerned.

In learning to care for group maintenance, some <u>simple ideas</u> can be useful. There are check questions to keep in mind more or less constantly, like 'how are people connected with each other at this moment?' There are useful instructions like 'note the number of levels of prestige in a group' and 'count the number of isolates'. There are generalisations like 'the less control people have over various aspects of their lives, the more apathetic they will tend to be' and 'the more bad things happen to people, the more mistrustful they are'.

Secondly, the worker must be able to <u>notice events</u> as they happen among people in a group. There are many people who can, for instance, correctly describe or identify a 'disturbed child' or a 'troublemaker', but who cannot notice when a child is getting angry or a man's feelings are being hurt. Many people unfortunately tend to deal in static categories rather than in evolving processes. I do not myself think that what has come to be known as sensitivity-training helps to more than a minor extent, because of its built-in tendency to confirm our already overdeveloped aptitude to categorise: it is fatally easy to come to assume that the proper response to what anybody says is to tell everyone in the group the name of the feeling which has just been expressed, received or experienced. Rather, I believe that there is enough going on among the people in a seminar or a practice placement to enable one to learn to notice a very large variety of interpersonal events, their connections and their consequences.

At the next more sophisticated level, the worker must be able to <u>intervene</u> on what he judges to be appropriate occasions. Some people are under-active either because they still need to learn to notice what is happening, or because they mistrust the validity of their intervention: what should they do? and by what right? Other people are over-active, again because they still need to learn to notice more of what is happening, but these tend to mistrust other people's ability to act appropriately; they tend to assume that if they don't act, no-one will. Most of us are, maybe, under-active in some circumstances and over-active in others. What we need is the opportunity to consider

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carefully evaluated experiences, helps us to make the necessary connections at the lightning speed required.

A related problem, which has helped to disgrace the 'helping profession' in the eyes of others, is that many quite good workers in the helping professions find it difficult to be a participant just like anyone else, to be connected in a group like everyone else, neither totally in control, nor totally abdicated. Especially those who work with discussion groups and committees find this a bother. I am surprised to find that the repeated reminder is helpful, that no one is ever "in control" of a group of people, that people are themselves, and that the worker is not expected to control everything because he could not, even if it were desirable.

One final profound issue: the worker engaged in the maintenance type of group work must get used to asking himself at intervals, whether he is justified in maintaining this particular group. At this moment, if they cannot do without his help, ought the group to be allowed to disintegrate? The worker must be helped to form criteria to enable him to answer this question. To this we shall return in the final section.

The reader may feel the disappointment and impatience most of us feel at the limitations which the above prescriptions place on our wish to help people in distress or danger here and now. Is this all that can be done when you see racism develop in a group, or a status-hierachy based on fear? Is this all that can be done to promote self-confidence, kindness and democracy? A little more can actually be done, and is discussed in the next section since it involves the creation of new structures. But a warning is appropriate here, for it can easily happen that a mistaken worker destroys a group which has potential for usefulness and growth, and destroys it because of his own anxieties and feelings of omnipotence. The very opposite of group maintenance! Very often such questions as 'what shall I do about the scapegoating' are imposed on us either by outsiders without access to all our information, or by our own overgrown and unrelenting conscience, or else by our lack of confidence that we can ever be worthwhile people. If that is so, then the actions which spring from them may be governed more by our need to prove our worth than by our need to be useful to specific others in need. Many of us in this culture are more apt to be managerial than to be loving, and we need to be constantly on guard against this cultural tendency to manage things so we shall not be blamed.

Nonetheless, there are maintenance actions which can occasionally be taken. These do of course depend on the situation, so what has been said about noticing etc., in the earlier part of this section, is crucial. But given some understanding of what is going on, two strategies may be considered. A direct strategy would be to respond to whoever in the group is likely to be the weakest link in the network - a key member with resources it would be difficult to replace, or a member who is likely to cause himself or his group suffering by his current behaviour - giving him sympathy, status, responsibility, laughter, distraction, reproof or a bawling out or an alternative interest or whatever. More indirectly, one can alter the structure of the situation by virtue of one's own role in the situation changing the times of meeting so as to keep two sub-groups separate or merge them, talking about what is happening in the group so as to alert people to the process and its implications, bringing in more helpers or laying on a lecture, etc. But with this, we come near to the creation of new structures, which is a topic which needs lengthy discussion, not least because of the complexity of the ethics which many feel should guide positive intervention.

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Creating new structures

Here I shall distinguish first between two general approaches, which could be called 'dealing with crises' or, less spectacularly, 'responding to need' on the one hand, and 'working for autonomy' or 'aiming at creativity' on the other. These terms are not perfectly appropriate; no doubt if the distinction is found useful, more acceptable terms will emerge. (4) Each approach furthers certain values and can at times be incompatible with the other, which means of course that those engaged in one kind of action may disapprove and feel hostile toward those engaged in the other. Either approach may at times lead to actions which go against values held by substantial numbers of people in our society. My own value-orientation is involved in the discussion which follows: I fear that a ledger account of all the consequences of all the interventions made by the new helping professionals (voluntary or paid) would show that more harm has been done than good. But I do not believe this need inevitably be so, given more respect for other people's wishes than has generally been the case in the past. (5)

By 'responding to need' I mean that the situation is seen, at least by the worker, as one in which the need for action is paramount. Many, though by no means all, social-action projects in England seem to be of this kind. They have a single interest, which may be rent-reduction, anti-racism, play-provision or whatever, to which other considerations take second place, either explicitly or implicitly. The worker and/or his group (workshop, committee or friends) is recognised by the clientele as an agent for change in some particular aspect. The status structure has at least two levels, with the worker and his group on one level, and their clients or beneficiaries on the other.

By 'working for autonomy' or 'aiming at creativity' I mean, essentially, that the worker's approach (and that of his group) is suffused with the conviction that the crisis approach is damaging in the long run. When he comes to feel this, it means that at any choice point he is likely to prefer to take steps which will make him redundant, or to take steps which confirm in his clientele the understanding that they can deal with the situation rather than quickly solve the problem on his own. Inasmuch as he feels this, the worker aims to let indispensibility rotate in the client-group as different needs emerge and are dealt with by different members of the group. (6) This is what is meant by autonomy. It also means risking that the main interest which brought his clientele together will suffer through the inefficiency, inexperience or lack of sustained interest of his clients. It means letting people make mistakes and learn from the experience.

'Responding to a need' and 'aiming at autonomy' or 'creativity', can be seen as phases which follow each other according to the demands of the situation, or they can be seen as individually preferred ways of working: there are people who engage in one or other approach regardless of the situation. There are as yet no generally agreed guide-lines as to the consequences of either

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(4) For an excellent analysis starting from the same distinction but going far deeper than I do here, but using a very ugly vocabulary, see Jack Rothman: 'An analysis of goals and roles in community organisation practice', in Reading in Community Organisation Practice, edited by H.M.Kramer and H.Specht, Prentice Hall, 1969.

(5) I can now also explain the persistent quotation marks round 'helping professions'. Practitioners have too often thought of their work as maintaining structures, and in this way they have often been less than helpful to their clientele. There is a second reason for the quotation marks. Too often practitioners have been so intent on being helpful that they did not stop to ask themselves whether people wanted their help, so that at times they have thrust their idea of help on unwilling recipients. It is a prolonged exposure to helpers of this

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(6) See my Study of Groups chapters 2 and 3. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956.

approach, or as to the circumstances in which either is best indicated. A review of the literature to shed light on this question would be very helpful. (7) Such a treatise could also deal with a related issue: what are the criteria by which a worker is to recognise the degree of autonomy and/or creativity with which his clientele is already comfortable? What are the stages by which an oppressed clientele with little experience of autonomy or creativity comes to the point when they get rid of a worker and run their own affairs?

The dilemma applies also to training. The teacher or trainer has a similar problem of deciding whether he shall at a particular moment intervene, or be helpful in some other way. What he does will affect the learner's autonomy and creativity profoundly. A tightrope has to be walked, between letting the learner flounder and feel ever more inadequate, on the one hand, or, on the other, making him over-dependent, and feeling inadequate for that reason. Moreover, each learner is unique. Maybe it is best to be inconsistent? But, by and large, if the problem can be regularly discussed, and the learner can respond with feedback as to how he feels, the situation can be clarified and we should begin to understand the circumstances which favour one or other approach.

I shall now look at some ways of creating new structures. I have roughly listed them in such a way as to take the response-to-need/work-toward-autonomy dimension into account, starting with those ways of working with people which appear to me to offer the greatest temptation to respond to need in a manner which might work against the client's autonomy. I do not of course mean that we should always yield to the temptation; only that the situation makes it harder to resist.

Introducing stimulus and new ideas
Furthering discussion
Responding to requests for advice and support
Making information available
Being a go-between; intergroup work and pressure-group work
Creating new structures unobtrusively: the open secret of training.

INTRODUCING STIMULUS AND NEW IDEAS

The workers most profoundly affected by the ideology of autonomy and creativity tend to underestimate the damage done by bad housing, lack of play-encouragement, authoritarian schooling and employment, etc. Or maybe they tend to over-estimate the ease with which such damage can be undone. In their respect for others they thus may miss opportunities. A group of people sitting around may be relaxing, enjoying an almost silent communion, and resting in their own integrity. But also, they may be bored, at a loss, and handicapped in finding their own stimulus. It doesn't do to be doctrinaire. They may be prey to irrational ideas like 'we are too old to go swimming' or 'we are not the sort to be allowed into the House of Commons' or 'evening classes are for students'. Yet they may also feel that their lives are duller than they need to be.

There is more potential in most people than is allowed to emerge, and there is room for those who work to allow it to emerge in others. This skill is so highly valued in France that it gives its name to the generally used word for youth worker there: 'animateur'.

There is room in our social life for animators: so how does one introduce others to new ideas or new practices? How does one know what to introduce and when? By what authority? How does one learn to do it?

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(7) One very relevant contribution would be that by P.Marris and M.Rein, Dilemmas of Social Reform Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

Certainly nothing is gained by saying briskly to a stranger: "Now, mother! Why don't you join the Keep Fit class?" or "We have come to teach your deprived children how to play" or "Let's march on the Town Hall". This is the approach which has swung over so many workers to favouring almost total passivity. Yet from crocheting or candlemaking through roller-skating to visits to Morocco and back again via a gift for making people laugh, something needs to be done about the greyness of our lives. And participating in a demonstration can make people feel less powerless and apathetic; something needs to be done about the resignation of the oppressed.

The answers may lie in a clear philosophy which has at least two threads which can be made explicit at this point. 1) You must not encourage people you don't know to do things they never thought of doing. 2) Few activities or ideas or areas of knowledge are good in themselves, but a certain quantity and variety of experiences may be essential foundations for autonomy and creativity - maybe it's quantity and variety that count.

One way of learning the art of intervention may be to realise that others have exercised it toward oneself (or failed to exercise it). It is very relevant therefore to consider the circumstances in which a training unit can, on the one hand, just passively hope for the best as far as people's learning by experience is concerned, or, on the other hand, insist that the student learn certain skills or theories at predetermined points.

FURTHERING DISCUSSION

A similar dilemma faces discussion-group workers. On the one hand they may contain themselves in what seems to less sophisticated souls quite praeternatural passivity. On the other hand they may act as though they saw themselves as indispensible experts without whom everyone would flounder. The solution to this dilemma is easier to perceive than to act out: if the need for a decision or for a correct fact (never a correct opinion) overrides the worker's aim toward the group's autonomy, then he must respond to that need and supply the answer. Secondly, he may have to intervene in order to enable the group to get on. That is, the worker may need to ask the group whether they are satisfied that they have all the facts they could get, or need, in order to come to a conclusion; or whether the group is satisfied that they have consulted everyone concerned; or whether they are satisfied with the amount of responsibility they haven't got, etc.

Myself, with an inexperienced committee, I would recommend the group to make an agenda and never to leave an item till they have agreed either to do something, or nothing, or to postpone, and if they have agreed on something, not to drop the item till they have agreed on who shall do it and report back to the next meeting. I would not in the first instance let them find this out by trial and error. I would take a hand in the process.

I would also take an occasional opportunity to refer briefly to some aspect of the group's life, so that some of the dynamics of group-interaction become obvious to the members, in the hope this would help them to manage better their interaction in this and in other groups.

RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT

People who work with people, managing their premises and providing services for them, tend to be seen as authoritative and helpful.

They are asked to give advice: "I am about to be evicted; what should I do?",

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They are asked to give advice: "I am about to be evicted; what should I do?", "I am about to be deserted, what should I do?", "I want to start a strike, what should I do?".

They are asked to exercise control "Will you sort it out for me?", "Will you tell her off for me".

They are asked to lend support: "A terrible thing happened to me; let me tell you", "Watch us win the match on Saturday/Come to our jumble sale/Show the flag", or "Can you contribute to this good cause/Lend me a pound till payday?"

In short, they tend to be used as though they were the ideal wise strong warm parent which few of us ever had and this makes the request hard to resist. In this situation most of all, the worker experiences in his own soul the dilemma of intervention. On the one hand he may tend to respond to all requests in terms of 'crisis' or 'need'. But if he does this, he runs the danger of creating dependents: people who 'don't know what we'd have done without him'. He will also alienate those around him who have no wish to partake of the dependent subculture which he has created. He will also find that he has an overgrowing number of requests, more, much more than he has time for. If he is unlucky, he will get so overwhelmed by requests that he has no time to stand back and reassess the situation he has got himself into, and he will continue in it till he breaks. If he is luckier or wiser, he will see that he needs to establish criteria for deciding which requests take top priority, which less so, and so on.

On the other hand, it needs saying (sorry comment though it be on our culture) that people need interest, support, praise, confirmation, if they are to have that sense of worth which leads to normal everyday creativity. Compared to some other cultures, we are somewhat deprived of the warmth we could shed on each other, and much of the praise which is meted out is unluckily reserved for those who do well in competitive situations. At least as regrettable is the fact that, presumably in part due to training, the professional subculture of the helping professionals is even more chary of warmth than the general culture is . So it needs saying at this point that autonomy and creativity are not just a matter of the correct social or psychological procedures: autonomy grows, as child psychologists know, when parents love their child and take pleasure in what he does - when they see him as worth while in himself and not simply in an instrumental way as the deserving object of their developmental child-rearing practices.

Clearly then, the issue is not one which can be solved in terms of 'directiveness' or 'non-directiveness'. What the worker does must depend on his evaluation of the situation in terms of his objectives as a worker, and the strategies he has chosen to use in their pursuit. To this we return at the end of this paper.

Three aspects of working with people to create new structures have now been considered. They can be summed up as providing opportunities for stimulus and innovation, for discussion and clarification, and for support and confirmation. The new structures thus created are more or less entirely in the minds of the people involved, and this is why they present so great a temptation to the worker to act in response to a need even where, upon consideration, aiming at autonomy would be the preferred procedure and the better investment. In each case, helping the worker to learn means working to make him conscious of the dilemma of his situation. There are at least three obvious ways in which he can be helped:-

i) making him aware intellectually of the alternatives before him,

ii) involving him in his teacher's dilemma about intervention, which after all is the same as his own,

iii) allowing him to ACT, to practice, which of course includes allowing him to make mistakes and learn from them - which causes his teacher the same embarrassment which an erring client will cause the worker.

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The new structures thus created are structures of the mind. Some workers concentrate on these more psychological potentialities of their role, but others look more to the formation of social structures, formed by connections between people. To this we now turn.

MAKING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

The use of information-enterprises as a way of working with people has until recently been underestimated. It is now coming to be recognised that we live in a complicated world, with complicated arrangements. There are already agencies, both profit-making and other, which specialise in collecting and summarising information useful to people who have not the time or the know-how or the status to ferret it out for themselves. Some of these are paid in a straightforward commercial way, e.g. solicitors; others are provided by voluntary or statutory organisations, e.g. C.A.B.'s, law-shops, youth employment offices, career guidance agencies, family planning advisory centres, etc. For various reasons, a larger number of such services is coming to be needed, and the need has also arisen for such services to be provided as far as possible on a self-help basis (not least because the toad beneath the harrow knows exactly where each toothpoint goes.) A full-time worker or a volunteer with leisure may have the resources of time and previous experience to be useful to a set of people with a particular need or interest who wants to start a service for people like themselves. A Welfare Claimants' Union might serve as a case in point. I wish there were Prospective Tenants' Unions who would participate in planning the estate to which they were to move. It also seems to me an excellent way to work with adolescents.

A value which is important to many people is served thereby: the value of rationality. In a society where it is normal for people to feel at the mercy of inexorable and uncontrollable forces, there is great scope for making arrangements to collect, process, store and disseminate whatever is relevant information to those affected. Information is power. Information should therefore be generally available.

The training aspect of this is relatively simple, depending on the one hand on good record-keeping and good filing-arrangements in the office of the training agency, and depending on the other hand on simple research techniques, using only the resources which would normally be available to a single worker with a few days to spare. A training agency has of course the problem of deciding what information is needed by the learners for whom it has responsibility, but this is best solved by consultation with the learners, just as the workers will need to consult their clientele in due course.

The role of 'making information available', like other roles previously touched upon, puts the worker in a very visible position, and he is therefore likely to be asked to perform other services as well, and it may be that he has so arranged his priorities that he can respond to the emergence of such further needs. In other words, it is up to the agency to decide, as best it can, whether to restrict itself to accurate information-giving or whether to provide also support and advice. To give a simple example, having told someone that he is entitled to a financial allowance which will pay for his coal during the winter, the worker might go with him to sort it out at the local office of the DHSS; or having told an enquirer that there is a flourishing theatre group in the area, the worker might offer to phone and see if they have a vacancy. The agency will need to decide whether to provide such services or not.

People in an information agency are also in a good position for being a go-between.

BEING A GO-BETWEEN: INTERGROUP WORK AND PRESSURE-GROUP WORK

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people with a particular need or interest who wants to start a service for people like themselves. A Welfare Claimants' Union might serve as a case in point. I wish there were Prospective Tenants' Unions who would participate in planning the estate to which they were to move. It also seems to me an excellent way to work with adolescents.

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BEING A GO-BETWEEN: INTERGROUP WORK AND PRESSURE-GROUP WORK

By intergroup work I mean liaison between groups, mediating, reconciling, interpreting each side to the other. The new connections which the worker makes in these cases are primarily social connections; the new structures are primarily social structures. There is an interesting psychic component however, since it is very easy for the worker to make mistakes, so that the social

structures will not survive him: when he goes, the structures crumble - he has made the venture too dependent on him. I have touched on the discussion-techniques which will help the worker avoid this disaster, and on the committee procedures which make groups independent of outside help. Good data collection and storage is a third aid.

Some go-between work consists of putting a group or a person in touch with the right person - the right official to talk to a group of people who are thinking of starting a playground, the right man from the Department of Employment to talk to a group of unemployed people with a grievance, the right person to advise, the right person to represent, etc. etc.

Ilys Booker used to tell a story of how her Canadian voice and manner helped get a playground for some mothers whose own local accent had not been successful with the authorities concerned. Her whole personality changed as she mimicked herself talking to the appropriate officer. I never doubted her story and I do not doubt that a middle-class accent and manner is more successful than what is regarded as a lower-class presentation by many decision-makers in our culture. Certain accents, manners, clothes, postures, age-groups, colours, inspire in others an assumption of financial or moral instability, on the one hand, and, on the other, an assumption that this person is personally unhelpful, unsympathetic and mistrustful. This applies between the social classes, between ethnic groups, between the generations, between the police and others, between agencies and their potential or actual clienteles, between the educated and the uneducated and so on. These assumptions may be justified or unjustified. How does one learn to be a go-between? How does one learn to remain a go-between? What are the criteria by which one decides not to remain a go-between but to take sides?

One learns to be a go-between by learning to understand and empathise with a wide variety of people. One learns to remain a go-between by having acquired the discipline to stick to one's objectives after having selected them with careful attention to the value-criteria which govern one's life.

Although pressure-group work is not in essence different from other kinds of intergroup work, I have selected it for special mention in order to counter-balance a general assumption that most work, if not maintenance work, is at least based on a general consensus. However, a group may wish to achieve its aim by conflict. In some situations, long usage has kept a category of people from some privilege, e.g. women are not acceptable engineers; or people in wheelchairs are barred from some courts. In some situations, a rule is operating against a category of people in a way which was possibly not intended or which is now perceived to be iniquitous, e.g. unsupported mothers who occasionally entertain a man are entitled to less money from the D.H.S.S. than those who are quite solitary. Or a privilege is sought which might be granted, given enough fuss, e.g. a clothing grant from the Welfare, or a piece of land for a playground, or the correction of some mistaken stereotype regarding the educability of the children of immigrants.

If a group seeks to change such situations, someone who has experience of working with people in ways I have touched upon, who also knows how the press or the local council operate and should be handled, who is used to formal legal argument, who can write conventional letters, who is realistic and systematic about planning strategies, etc. etc. is a useful person to have around. A good memory and a talent for instant relating are also a help, in that they enlarge the set of helpful people who can be called upon.

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Here, very clearly, is one nexus of working with people - knowing a lot of people, knowing a lot of facts, and making connections for the survival or growth of certain groups and/or ideas.

We come thus to the two essentials which justify people in that presumptuous activity 'working with people'. What justifies them and entitles them to think of themselves as useful comes to two factors: more knowledge and more know-how - knowing a lot of facts and a lot of people, and knowing strategies as to how to attain objectives.

Both of these can be used possessively to keep others ignorant, grateful and dependent, while remaining superior, helpful and indispensible oneself. The same temptation also faces the trainer or teacher, who can put students into that relationship with himself. The intention may be genuinely toward the student's good: to minimise the mistakes that are made and maximise the number of subjects covered. In either case a dependent can be made more dependent for his own good. It is clear that sometimes this dependence is a justifiable price to pay. It is also clear that the price is high.

As a rule, this dependence can be avoided.

CREATING NEW STRUCTURES UNOBTRUSIVELY: THE OPEN SECRET OF TRAINING

Creating new structures unobtrusively is a way of working with people which does away with the distinction between 'training' and other forms of creative interaction between people. It seems to me to require progressive improvement in at least three interrelated aspects of living.

(a) Humility, objectivity, lack of displaced guilt, etc.

There is something about defining oneself as a helpful person, especially if one is paid a salary for it, which easily throws people off balance. Internal and external pressures combine to make one feel at the same time arrogant and inadequate. For instance, one might feel one ought to present a very knowledgeable front while in a constant panic that one will not know enough to understand or help. Improvement consists of being objective about what one can and cannot perform at that time, objective enough to be able to say so out loud. Efforts can then be made, by the worker (or mutatis mutandis the trainer) or by those he works with, to get the needed additional information, understanding, money, helping personnel or whatever. Meanwhile the relation between the worker (or the trainer) and the others becomes a more natural one, since everyone is more objectively perceived.

(b) Sociability, friendliness, lack of status-anxiety, etc.

Knowing a lot of people is still the easiest way of being well-informed and in touch with the many different ways in which people can live their lives and pursue their own interests. To the extent that the worker (or the trainer) is humble and objective, to that extent the barriers come down between him and a wide variety of people, and to that extent he will be affected by the various currents in the different regions of our social structure. Such sociability leads to creativity and also enables him to be more knowledgeable (making connections between ideas, events, feelings, ideals) and to create new structures (by putting people in touch with one another). This is a process which snowballs.

(c) Clarity, smoothness and comprehensiveness of technique

Lastly on this list, there is technique. As foreshadowed, what follows applies both to the process by which the worker is trained, and to the process in which he is expected to engage when trained. Technique insofar as it is technical/mechanical, applies to the rules of procedure unique to particular kinds of work. Such rules are, of course, value-based - they are rules which, if followed,

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The key words will be values, objectives, orders of priority, strategies, resources, criteria. These are words in common use, but it could be useful to look more closely at two of them. People have orders of priority. That is to say, in their activities they find themselves doing what they feel is most important. This may be a subjective and unconscious choice: the values they say they hold and the objectives they say they wish to pursue may - or they may not - affect what they actually do. There may be a discrepancy between their explicit ideals and their behaviour, the latter indicating what their implicit convictions are. This tendency must be disciplined if they are to behave in such a way that other people's values and preferences are respected, if their procedures are to be public, rational, and self-correcting, and if they are not to create a set of dependents on their inexplicable intuitive judgments. For instance, to a regrettable extent people can easily trot out their values and objectives, and yet in their activities continually react to the next demand and feel guilty because they are not achieving all their objectives. Unless these are ordered in some kind of way from most important to less important, this is bound to happen, for most activities further some worthwhile goal or other. For specific work, a specific order of objectives is needed, from most to less important. These objectives in this order then constitute the value-criteria according to which one course of action is explicitly and publicly preferred to another. The process by which this comes about is as follows:-.

1. Consider various alternative objectives and agree on the main objective (or objectives, in order of priority).

A trainer working in this way might for instance consider what the trainee wishes to learn and to what end? what else is available to be learned? how should they choose between these alternatives, i.e. what value-criteria apply to their choice? how do they decide what is to be preferred? to what objectives are they willing to give lower priority in pursuit of their main objective? and other such questions.

The worker will work with a group in the same way. Why have they come together? What are they hoping to achieve? Is there anything else which might be more urgent? Can we make explicit why this is a more urgent objective than other possible ones? How much time, money, energy, are people willing to spend on this objective? and other such.

2. Consider the available resources of time, money, personnel, space, etc.
3. Consider the various alternative steps or strategies (series of steps) and agree on the steps by which the objective(s) can be attained, given the resources.

What needs to be done in what order? To be Irish, what needs to be done before we can start? What foundations need to be laid? Who is responsible for what aspect? Can we fix dates by which each step ought to be reported as accomplished? As for each step, can it be attained in another way and which is best? What criteria decide what a particular way of achieving a step is best? Is this set of people here at the moment the right set? Should other people be invited or consulted? What are the criteria for this? Does the task require this group to organise itself in a particular division of labour? What are the criteria for this? and so on.

4. Consider and agree on the extent to which the strategy and the objective(s) further or offend other human values.

What if X loses his job as a result? What if it creates a riot? What if we lose financial support from source YY? What if half the present membership leaves in a huff? What about those who have been emotionally or in some other way dependent on the current state of affairs which it is proposed to change? Who will suffer if the scheme breaks down or we pull out? What are the criteria for deciding to go ahead in spite of stated disadvantages.

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5. Carry out the plan: ACT.

6. Evaluate the extent to which the objective was attained by the steps planned and/or taken, note discrepancies and try to understand them. Record the lessons learned.

The importance of evaluation is obvious as regards training, but it is equally important in other spheres of work. It is evaluation which enables people to use past experience to good advantage, thus ultimately making the worker (or, mutatis mutandis, the teacher) redundant.